

Introduction

April 2006

To: Agency Directors, Managers, and Human Resources Professionals

From: Ann Heilman, Administrator, Division of Human Resources

Re: Employee Recognition Week

May 3, 2006, is State Employee Recognition Day. The National Association of State Personnel Executives, an affiliate of the Council of State Governments, has set this day to raise national awareness of state employees and the important work they do. States across our country will celebrate with gubernatorial proclamations, employee appreciation awards, career service awards, media interviews, news articles, recognition ceremonies and other events. The entire week of May 1st through the 7th is designated as Public Service Recognition Week to include employees at the federal, state, and local levels.

Your participation is more important than ever to create a climate of genuine appreciation for your staff.

Even if your agency has other employee recognition events, this week is an important opportunity for agency managers to acknowledge the outstanding dedication of their staff. Our challenge as leaders is to convey a compelling and positive vision of the future, and to ensure each employee feels connected to the mission of their agency's work. Acknowledgment should be widely inclusive and build team morale, not single out just a few employees. This packet has information, including low-cost and no-cost ideas, to spark your initiatives.

Appreciation and recognition are more about attitude than resources. A very wise woman said, ". . . people will forget what you said, people may forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel." Please plan to take time on May 3rd, or sometime during that week, to demonstrate how you feel about your staff and their dedication to public service. If you'd like assistance, just let us know.

Ann Heilman, Administrator Division of Human Resources

Reasons to Appreciate Your Employees!

- 1. For the smile that is always there
- 2. Hands that are always willing to help
- 3. A creative idea
- 4. Consistent quality work
- 5. Continuous improvement
- 6. An extra-mile effort
- 7. Meeting the goal
- 8. Surpassing the goal
- 9. A winning attitude
- 10. Support
- 11. Loyalty
- 12. Punctuality
- 13. Cost-conscious behavior
- Being part of the team
- 15. Solving a problem
- 16. Commitment to the customer
- 17. Service with a smile
- 18. A "whatever it takes" philosophy
- 19. Strong leadership
- 20. Having the vision to make it happen
- 21. Perseverance
- 22. Big dreams
- 23. For being fast and efficient
- 24. Making the commitment
- 25. For doing everything that is asked...
- 26. Accepting a challenge

- 27. Seizing the opportunity
- 28. Overcoming insurmountable odds
- 29. Doing it right the first time
- 30. For believing and then succeeding
- 31. For never quitting
- 32. Being committed to the safety of others
- 33. Thinking ahead
- 34. Managing time wisely
- 35. Motivating others
- 36. For having superior skills and ability
- 37. Having the courage to push ahead
- 38. Always expecting to win
- 39. Outstanding achievement
- 40. Making tough choices
- 41. Staying well-read and informed
- 42. Overcoming fears and failure
- 43. Always giving of time and effort
- 44. Ethical behavior
- 45. Being committed to team effort
- 46. Accepting responsibility
- 47. For attendance
- 48. For blazing new trails
- 49. For uncommon commitment
- 50. For dedicating your career to public service

Adapted from the University of Idaho's Employee Recognition Program. For more information, go to http://www.hr.uidaho.edu/default.aspx?pid=34340.

Sample Slogans & Themes

Choose One • Alter One • Create Your Own

- State Employees Above and Beyond!
- State of Idaho Employees The Spirit of Serving
- State Employees Serving Idaho's People
- State Employees a Class Act!
- State Employees Working to Build a Better Future
- You're simply the best Thank You State Employees!
- State Employees Nobody does it Better
- Dedicated, Inspired, Committed Thank You, State of Idaho Employees
- State Employees A Greater State, Thanks to You!
- State of Idaho Employees, Serving with Pride!
- State of Idaho Employees Celebrate Excellence
- State of Idaho Employees Making a Difference Every Day
- Excellence in action Idaho's State Employees!
- State Employees You Make it Happen!
- State Employees Imagine, Believe, Achieve!

Ideas & Activities

Employee Recognition Week is a time to celebrate the wonderful resource we have in our employees. "Thank you" seems inadequate at times considering how valuable our employees are to our organizations. It is through their dedication, loyalty, talent, expertise, and energy that mere ideas become reality, that policy becomes practice, and that programs become services provided.

There are many ways to show appreciation to your employees. Recognition for work well done, and creating a friendly, positive work environment are two examples. All efforts should be sincere and meaningful.

Listed below are ideas and activities divided into three categories geared toward your agency's preferred approach: Energized and Want to Celebrate, Need a Few Good Ideas, or Want to Do Something with Limited Resources. Choose your category, or pick a mix from all three. Appreciation is all about attitude and a personal touch!

1. If You're Energized & Want to Celebrate . . .

- Sponsor an open house for the public to meet employees, showcase their talents, and learn more about the agency.
- Recognize employees who have reached significant milestones in their careers with the State of Idaho through awards or certificates, e.g., 10 year anniversary, 15, 20, etc.
- Develop and sponsor an "Excellence in Public Service" award for the department, region, or district.
 (Other types of awards could include excellence in quality, customer service, initiative, cost saving.)
 See the Certificate and Award Ideas page in this packet.
- Feature different careers within the agency each day on the bulletin boards, on the intranet, in the newspaper.
- Create a "Wall of Fame" which could include photos of each employee, children, spouses, home town, achievements, drawings, special hobbies or activities – something to recognize each person as an individual. Bring out the "extra" in extraordinary.
- Bring in a speaker to provide training and combine the training with a recognition/awards celebration complete with refreshments. For example, sponsor an afternoon or morning of annual required training on harassment or safety. Check the Board of Examiners' policy on reimbursement of expenses for refreshments/lunch when holding a meeting or training.
- Find a way for managers to personally thank each employee. If it is impossible to thank them in person, send a hand written note, make a phone call, or stop in their office. A note, a phone call, or a drop by can mean much more than an email.

- Contact a local newspaper and provide them a news article on Employee Recognition Week/Day and ask them to feature one or two state employees using quotes or pictures; include a disk with pictures of state employees in action.
- Celebrate with food. Sponsor an office potluck or lunch out. Serve breakfast, lunch or dinner cooked and/or served by senior management.
- Sponsor a fun food event...ask employees to list their top three favorite snack foods. Provide the top
 10 sometime during Recognition Week.
- Post banners, signs and posters expressing appreciation to public employees. Be creative, post it on the outside of the building where all can see. See the attached slogan and poster ideas. The attached sample posters are available via electronic file if you wish to customize them.
- If there is a desktop publisher or graphic artist on staff in the agency, use their talents to help develop posters, bulletin boards, and other ideas.
- Ask employees to volunteer to give 20-30 minute inhouse workshops over the noon hour. The workshops would focus on a talent or hobby that they possess, e.g., water color painting, home computer updates, music, growing a vegetable garden, herbs, getting the yard ready for summer, organizing the garage.
- Sponsor contests during the week, e.g., "Remember When" photo contests (guess the baby photos, guess the photos of employees' parents, employees' pets, etc); guess the number of Jelly Beans, M & M's, or paper clips in a jar; number of times "Caught in the Act of Doing Something Good."
- Organize an activity after work hours that many may participate in for example, bowling, a movie, an outdoor picnic – or create your own events. Award prizes.
- Collect drawings from employees' children or grandchildren. The drawing could be about "What my Dad, Mom, Grandpa, Grandma, Aunt, Uncle, Sister, Brother, does at work." Display the drawings for everyone to enjoy! This can be enjoyable for the public as well.
- Have a "message for the day" pop up as employees' computers are turned on for the day; it could be on the desktop or on the agency's intranet. The message could be short, positive, humorous and/or upbeat; it can be a quotation or a thought for the day. The message could even include the agenda for the day's activities.
- Arrange to have a local historian, or interested individual, lead an office local area guided walk. Invite
 employees to join in on the guided noon hour walk to enjoy local history, geography, vegetation, or
 season.
- Sponsor a Silly Socks Day, Ugly Tie Day, Inside-Out Clothing Day, or Hawaiian Shirt Day. Have employees vote and award prizes.

- Make an Appreciation Tree. Draw a large tree on poster board or flip chart paper and hang it on a wall.
 Give each employee 1-3 paper leaves to write what is positive in their work or home life. Gather the leaves and tape or paste them on the tree for all to see.
- Consider using donations from area businesses as prizes throughout the week (check your agency's
 policy first) For information on donation limitations, see the Board of Examiner's policy.
- Sponsor popcorn and a movie. Check out movies available from the library. Consider a humorous or light-hearted training film with a motivational message.
- ◆ If the agency is large, create a bingo card requiring a signature from a person in each division, program, or bureau of the agency. When the bingo cards are filled in, a prize is awarded!
- Create a crossword puzzle of employee names. Ask employees for 3 interesting facts about themselves to serve as the clues. Give a few clues each day via email. Prizes for 10 or more correct names.
- Draw a puzzle. Give each employee a piece of the puzzle with their name. The employee is asked to complete the statement and write on their piece... "What I enjoy about working here is _______.
 _. "Or, ... "The special talent I bring to my job is ______." Ask the employees to fit their pieces of the puzzle on the wall for all to see.
- There are many unique talents and gifts that make up an organization. Ask employees to interview a fellow agency employee whom they don't know well or with whom they don't generally interact. Each employee should be interviewed only once. Ask the employee to post testimonials from staff stating why they give their time and talents to the organization. The testimonials can be placed on the intranet, the bulletin board, or posters.
- Feature a "Star Salute" of several different employees each day of the week. Highlight accomplishments, family, fun facts. Post on your intranet or newsletter.
- Nominate a fellow employee for appreciation. Ask employees to nominate fellow employees for appreciation in 100 words or less. At the end of the week, each employee receives an individualized copy of the things their fellow workers and supervisors appreciate in them. Refer to the Certificate and Award Ideas page in this packet.
- Sponsor a Benefits Fair or Health Fair.
- Distribute "You Make a Difference" cards to employees. Employees are asked to award the cards to coworkers throughout the week whenever they catch someone making a difference to an internal or external customer.
- ◆ Take photos of employee activities throughout the week and put them on display or in your newsletter.

Find ways to make the week special.

2. If You Just Need A Few Good Ideas . . .

- Recognize employees who have reached significant milestones in their careers with the State of Idaho through awards or certificates, e.g., 10 year anniversary, 15, 20, etc. For information on State of Idaho service awards, email ljilbert@dhr.idaho.gov or call Laurie Jilbert at 208-429-5502.
- Find a way for managers to personally thank each employee. If it is impossible to thank them in person, send a hand written note, make a phone call, or stop in their office. A note, a phone call, or a drop by can mean much more than an email.
- Put up posters letting everyone know, inside and out, that it's Employee Recognition Week.
- Ask the local newspaper to run an article on Employee Recognition Week/Day. Ask them to feature quotes & pictures of state employees; include a disk with pictures of employees in action.
- Celebrate with food! Sponsor an office potluck or lunch out.
- Have an ice cream social or a root beer float mobile (use a book cart.)
- Sponsor a chili dog lunch or outdoor barbeque at noon.
- Provide juice and donuts one morning.
- No money to sponsor a breakfast or lunch? Plan a menu and ask each employee to bring just one
 item.
- Give employees a candy bar with a personalized message or motivational quote slipped inside the candy bar sleeve. Examples: Three Musketeers bar with a note about team spirit (all for one, one for all). Others:
 - · A stick of Gum ~ to encourage staff to stick with a difficult project
 - A Fireball ~ to light up your staff's day when they feel burned out
 - · A Smartie ~ to show creative ideas are appreciated
 - A Starburst ~ to give a burst of energy
 - A Mint ~ to refresh one's spirit or outlook
 - A 100 Grand Bar ~ because you think they're grand
 - · A Nestle Crunch Bar ~ because you can count on them in a crunch
 - A roll of Lifesavers ~ to remind staff that they are valuable
 - · An Almond Joy Bar ~ because they are a joy to have around
- Place a message from the agency director on the agency's intranet.
- Have a casual dress day during the week.
- Prepare a scrapbook that details achievements throughout the year
- Invite your customers or employees of 'sister' agencies to visit your offices for an after-work drop in to get to know each other better.
- Make a scrapbook of complimentary letters and notes to agency employees from customers. Display scrapbook in a prominent place.
- Challenge another division or agency to a softball game, golf scramble, bowling tournament or other sporting event and invite agency employees and families.

- Host a Walk to Wellness event. Map out a 20-40 minute route that employees can walk within a certain time limit. Ask the agency director to lead the walk. Provide juice, water, or free t-shirts for participating employees.
- Create a scavenger hunt using your agency's intranet. Employees can have fun and learn how to better use their intranet as a resource.
- ◆ Use the "POP" theme throughout the week Present a "Providing Outstanding Performance" Award, pop corn and deliver it throughout the agency, provide soda pop, fill balloons and pop them throughout the week for prizes, encourage employees to 'pop' in on one another expressing 'thank you's' for work well done.
- Use the popular 'survivor' theme to create your week. Provide clues and challenges throughout the week with rewards at the end of each task.

3. If You Have Limited Time or Resources . . .

- Involve managers. Shared leadership can spread the workload and increase morale.
- Recognize employees who have reached significant milestones in their careers with the State of Idaho through awards or certificates, e.g., 10 year anniversary, 15, 20, etc. For information on State of Idaho service awards, email ljilbert@dhr.idaho.gov or call Laurie Jilbert at 208-429-5502.
- If celebrating the week is not possible, do something special on Employee Recognition Day, May 3,
 2006. Make an effort to make that day special in some way.
- Find a way for managers to personally thank each employee. If it is impossible to thank them in person, send a hand written note, make a phone call, or stop in their office. A note, a phone call, or a drop by can mean much more than an email.
- Put up posters letting everyone know, inside and out, that it's Employee Recognition Week.
- Ask the local newspaper to run a news article on State Employee Recognition Week/Day.
- Greet individual employees by name and with eye contact. Take a few minutes to see how they are doing. Be sincere.
- Make an effort to meet with employees you do not see or speak with very often. Take a break together, have coffee or an off-site lunch.
- Act on good news. Catch people doing something right and thank them for it.
- Take time to listen when employees need to talk. Be responsive to people, not just problems.
- Take time at the beginning or end of meetings to share positive news such as letters of commendation, or ask if there is any praise or random acts of kindness employees would like to share.
- Manage by wandering around! Get out of your office to see, meet, and speak with employees about the work they are doing. Take different routes in and out of the department.
- Doing anything is better than nothing. It's not the event, but the thought that counts.

Certificate & Award Ideas Need Some Help Getting Started?

Sample Certificate Titles

- Grand Production
- Outstanding Dependability Award
- The Power of One Award
- Encore Award
- Silver Lining Award
- Priceless Performance Award
- You Are the Best Kept Secret Award
- Grace Under Pressure Award
- · Fanfare! Award
- Behind the Scenes Award
- Making A Positive Difference Award
- Standing Ovation Award
- Believe and Succeed Award
- Information Technology Excellence Award
- Attitude is Everything Award
- Brilliance Award
- Professional Excellence Award
- Win From Within Award
- Cost-Effective Solutions Award
- On Time Award
- Whatever It Takes Award
- Stellar Proposal Award
- 110% Solution Award
- · Teamwork Plus Award

Sample Certificate Titles (Light Hearted)

- · Rookie of the Year
- Elbow Grease Award
- · High Five! Award
- · Why Didn't I Think of That Award
- · Miles of Smiles Award
- The Invisible Man/Woman Award
- Your Halo's Showing Award
- Thumbs Up! Award
- Applause, Applause Award
- Superstar Award
- Top Dog Award
- Hats Off Award
- Faster Than a Speeding Bullet Award
- Bravo Award
- Trust Your Crazy Ideas Award
- You are a Shining Star Award
- Penny Pinching Performance Award
- Just Did It Award
- · Mr/Ms Congeniality Award
- Woman/Man Extraordinaire Award
- The A Team Award

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Priceless Words to Make Your Own

Sometimes it's hard to know just what to say or write to your employees. Following is a list of short, positive messages that can be customized to the employees and the performance goals of your organization.

- Your personal commitment to quality is obvious in everything you do.
- You are a creative thinker.
- Your dedication to seeing a project through is second to none.
- Your dedication contributes to our success.
- You bring vision to this team. Thank you for showing others an alternate perspective.
- The service you provided exceeded all expectations.
- Your personal commitment to excellence has inspired others to push past mediocrity. They are changed because of you.
- We recognize and appreciate your dedicated efforts.
- All achievements begin with an idea. Your innovations put those ideas in front.
- Thanks for coming to bat at the end of the ninth inning!
- Your vision and perspective inspire all those whose lives you touch.
- You took the time and that has made all the difference!
- It is your careful attention to detail that makes you so special!
- You consistently "go the extra mile."
- Thank you for taking the initiative.
- Your objectivity makes idea sharing happen.
- Two thumbs up! You reached your goal!
- Your personal pride in your work is obvious . . . and never taken for granted.

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The Recognition Basket

Susan Shelander, Director of Development and Retention for Memorial Hermann Hospitals shared the following list of recognition basket items at the 2004 National Association of Employee Recognition Annual Conference. Providing recognition and appreciation can be as simple as saying a heartfelt thank you. However, if you want to inject a bit of playfulness into your low-cost or no-cost recognition efforts, read the creative list below. By incorporating a spirit of play into the workplace, you can encourage employee cooperation and support through humor and a sense of fun. When people are able to laugh with one another, it is encouraging, motivating, brings energy to the workplace and releases potential!

AlmondJoy Joy is a special gift we give to each other just by simply being in the presence of each

other. You brought joy to my day! Thanks.

Butterfinger To remind you that everyone makes mistakes. Always remember to forgive and ask for-

giveness of others. Mistakes happen; find the root cause.

Band Aid To remind you to heal hurt feelings, yours or someone else's, because one must be

healed in order to function at full capacity.

Clock Remember there are just so many minutes in an hour and hours in a day. Make time for

yourself a priority and you will always have enough time for others.

Compass To remember to take new directions for personal growth and development and explore all

the resources available to you.

Confetti If you don't make life a party who will??? Remember everyday can be a party and some

days really need a party. Take care of yourself and then you will be able to take care of

others.

Eraser To remind you that we all make mistakes and mistakes can be erased just as your human

frailties can be overcome.

Key To remind you to unlock your fears and focus on your possibilities.

LemonDrop For all of life's little sours, for without lemons there would be no lemonade.

Lifesavers To remind you to think of your colleagues as 'lifesavers'. Care about each other and help

each other through the stressful times that occur in life.

Mars Bar To say you think your staff is out of this world! Candy metaphors provide opportunities to

give sweet treats coupled with praise.

Mints To remind you that you add value to your institution and you are worth a Mint—encour-

age-mint, acknowledge-mint, enjoy-mint, empower-mint and to stamp out resentment and

arguments.

Crunch

Mirror To encourage positive reflection on self and others.

Nestle Remember, when in a 'crunch' some folks step up to the plate and help. Who do you

depend on when your work unit is hit hard—your staff! Acknowledge these times that your

staff pitch in with appreciation and a simple treat!

Paper Clip To remind you it is important to keep it all together. Find the balance between your physi-

cal, emotional, professional and spiritual life.

Peanut To remind us of all the nutty things we do and see the humor in our mistakes.

Pencil To remind you not to get drawn in by a negative person, and to remember to list your

blessings everyday.

Penny To remind you of the value of your thoughts and your worth as a person.

Pin To remind you to stay sharp.

Rubber To remind you to stretch your ideas, your mind, body and spirit to new limits so you will Band

continue to grow and reach your potential. A rubber band also will remind you to be flex-

ible, as things may not always go your way.

Ruler To measure your progress and chart your momentum.

Smarties To help you on those days when you don't feel too smart. Also, there are plenty of smart

people who are willing to be your mentor and coach.

Snickers To remind you to laugh at yourself and enjoy the laughter of others. Humor is the soul

> smiling and is necessary for survival. Also, recognition is nothing to snicker at - it is valuable feedback when tied to performance and offered in a timely and sincere manner!

Seeds To plant your personal garden of growth and to share the bounty with those you see every

day.

Starburst To give you a burst of energy on the days you don't have any.

Stick of Gum To remind you to 'stick' to your ideas and projects and you can accomplish anything.

Chewing on the information sometimes brings greatness to life.

String To serve as a reminder to 'tie up' loose ends and have some FUN. Do not allow yourself

to be 'tied up' by choices that are NOT fun.

SweetN-To help you appreciate the differences in others. Sours

Like a teabag, sometimes we do not know our own strength until we find ourselves in hot Teabag

water! Draw on your inner strengths when challenged. It is rare that we let ourselves

down!

Tissue To remind you that wiping away the discomforts of life will sometimes prevent you from

experiencing life. Tears can be healing.

To remind you to pick out the good qualities in others as well as yourself. Be tolerant and **Toothpick**

accepting of the differences in others.

TootsieRoll To remind you to not bite off more than you can chew.

Whistle To remember to blow this instead of your stack. Breathe in and out to the count of seven

and regroup.

Motivation Can Happen When . . .

- There is variety in the work to be done.
- People have a sense of pride and accomplishment in their work.
- There are challenges and opportunities along with coaching and mentoring.
- There are opportunities to take the initiative and generate ideas or projects.
- There is interaction with others inside or outside the agency.
- There is meaningful work to be done.
- It is safe to express ideas; it is okay to risk.
- The office environment or work style is forward thinking.
- People know that their work make a difference.
- There are good employee benefits.
- There are opportunities for professional growth and development.
- There is regular feedback from supervisors and colleagues.
- Recognition is received for work well done.
- There are opportunities to relax, laugh, and get to know co-workers.

Sample Poster Ideas

Use the Slogans from page 3 of this packet, or any other slogan, to create "Thank You" posters. The sample posters on the following pages may inspire you to create your own. If you want to customize *these* posters, we can email you the graphics without text . . . Just call 208-429-5510 or email lsmith@dhr.idaho.gov.







You're Simply The Best



Thank You State Employees!

Resources

NAER

The National Association of Employee Recognition (NAER) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the enhancement of employee performance through recognition, including its strategies and related initiatives. The association provides a forum for information and best practices sharing as well as education to foster the use, excitement, effectiveness, and enthusiasm for recognition. Visit their website: www.recognition.org

University of Idaho Recognition Program

For more information, go to http://www.hr.uidaho.edu/default.aspx?pid=34340.

Films, books and other resources:

The Idaho State Library, 1-208-334-2150, www.lili.org/isl

Ideas on training or trainers:

Division of Human Resources Web Site: www.dhr.idaho.gov; click on Training

Motivational articles, newletters, and quotes:

www.academyofsuccess.org www.quotablequotes.net

Motivational posters:

www.questforsuccess.com www.successories.com

Recognition gifts, awards, and prizes:

Baudville, Inc. 1-800-728-0888 www.baudville.com

Buy Idaho 1-800-743-9549 www.buyidaho.org/index.html

Positive Promotions 1-800-635-2666 www.positivepromotions.com Best Impressions Promotional Products 1-800-635-2378 www.bestimpressions.com

Crestline Custom Imprinted Products 1-800-221-7797 www.crestline.com

The Oriental Trading Company, Inc. 1-800-228-2269 www.orientaltrading.com

Recommended Reading

Art of Recognition (The): Companies Don't Succeed ... People Do! Mac Anderson. Successories, 800-535-2773.

I Saw What You Did and I Know Who You Are: Bloopers, Blunders, and Success Stories on Giving and Receiving Recognition.

Janis Allen with Gail Snyder, Phone: 828-862-6552, janisallen@yahoo.com

<u>Joy of Recognition (The): Designing and Implementing A Successful Recognition Program.</u>

Lynnette Younggren and Debra Sikanas, 2000. Baudville, Inc., 800-728-0888.

Love Em or Lose Em.

Beverly Kaye and Sharon Jordan-Evans, 1999. Berrett-Koehler Pub., Inc. 415-288-0260.

Priceless Motivation: Quick Tips to Excite and Inspire Your Most Valuable Asset.... Baudville, Inc., 1998. 800-728-0888.

Recognition, Gratitude, and Celebration.

Patrick L. Townsend and Joan Gebhardt, 1997. Crisp Management Library.

Workplace Recognition: Step-by-Step Examples of a Positive Reinforcement Strategy. Sue Glassock and Kimberly Gram, 1999.

You Made My Day: Co-worker Recognition and Relationship. Janis Allen and Michael McCarthy, 2000. Phone: 828-862-6552.

<u>50 One-Minute Tips for Retaining Employees: Building a Win-Win Environment.</u> David Hayes and Jack Ninemeier, 2001. Crisp Publications.

1001 Ways to Reward Employees.

Bob Nelson, 1994. Workman Publishing Company.

Encouraging the Heart: A Leader's Guide to Rewarding and Recognizing Others. James Kouzes and Barry Posner, 2003.

Handle with Care: Motivating and Retaining Employees. Barbara Glanz, 2002. McGraw Hill.